Contemplating the coronavirus crisis through a postmigrant lens? From segregative refugee accommodations and camps to a vision of solidarity

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Contemplating the coronavirus crisis through a postmigrant lens?
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Claudia Böhme, Marc Hill, Caroline Schmitt and Anett Schmitz

Introduction

This chapter takes the coronavirus pandemic that first emerged in December 2019 as a springboard to reflect on how society deals with forced migration from a post-migrant perspective. Such a theoretical vantage seeks to 'demigratize' research on forced migration (Römhild 2017). Analytical inquiry then is not a mode of special research on refugees but rather it investigates the societal power relations and social inequalities that affect all human beings. The experience of forced migration is relevant for research exploring living together in society as a whole. Taking that premise as a point of departure, the present study investigates dedicated refugee accommodation centers and camps as specific settings in which persons who have fled their homes and countries are largely separated, segregated and shielded from the rest of the population. The chapter addresses the questions: What are the life realities of human beings in these settings? What significance do they have for life together in society as a whole? How is it possible against this backdrop to conceptualise postmigrant visions of an urban, cosmopolitan, inclusive and open living together in solidarity?

The Covid-19 pandemic is a global crisis, impacting on all independently of their stories of migration, and provides a context for looking in greater depth at relations in the whole of society. In the midst of a pandemic, priority is given to protecting human lives and human health. However, social inequalities and inequity are reproduced in this crisis (see Scherr 2020; Triandafyllidou 2020; Wagner 2020), in particular in regard to how refugees are accommodated. We consider it highly germane for research to focus on these spaces of inequality in order to think anew and in fundamental depth about modes and forms of temporary accommodation.

This study is grounded on a step-by-step focus on the actual everyday life realities of refugees accommodated in dedicated facilities in Germany, the refugee camp Moria on the Greek island of Lesbos and the Kakuma Refugee Camp and Kalobeyei Settlement in Kenya, and looks at the exacerbation of living conditions there as a result of the coronavirus pandemic. The effects of the pandemic do not just foreground the debate over closure of national borders and the EU policy of sealing off its external boundaries; those impacts also intensify the stressful consequences of refugees living cramped closely together in large-scale accommodations and camps.

In a first section, the chapter discusses the risks and dangers residents in refugee accommodations in Germany are exposed to as a result of deficient protection measures during the pandemic (and not only then). That perspective is extended in a second section, which examines the daily realities of life of refugees housed in the Moria refugee camp on Lesbos and the situation in the Kakuma refugee camp in Kenya. Case examples do also focus on beyond Germany and Europe's external borders in order to avoid a methodological nationalism (Wimmer/Schiller 2002) and Eurocentrism. The study seeks to show that the deficient housing circumstances of refugees constitute a global problem. A look at daily life realities directly in situ renders it possible to gather subjective individual assessments and biographical narratives and to interrogate hegemonial perspectives. The paper's third section confronts the problematic aspects of segregate accommodations and camps, now becoming ever more visible as a result of the coronavirus pandemic, with postmigrant visions of an open city (Hill 2018). That section explores the potentials of living together in solidarity as a highly promising transformative vision with relevance for the whole of society, negotiating concepts of cosmopolitan, open and inclusive urban spaces as starting points for imagining a different future. The concluding fourth section sketches the vision of a plan of solidarity. It views belonging to an urban space as something not based on the criterion of national citizenship, but rather thinks beyond a separation of refugees, contrasting such exclusionary wall-building with forms of residence and living together in dynamic solidarity.[1]

Refugee accommodations and camps as danger zones

Even if individual countries and the EU are increasingly focusing their attention on grappling with Covid-19 and concentrating on the protection of vulnerable groups, the situation of refugees placed in refugee accommodations and camps

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[1] This chapter was written March to May 2020. Developments extending beyond that period of time have thus not been taken into account. Translated from German by William Templer.

in Europe and the Global South is in danger of being overlooked. In this context, dedicated accommodations in these difficult times constitute spaces of special threat and risk for their residents. This form of accommodation is fundamentally characterised by ambivalence: on the one hand refugees live separated from the rest of society and are positioned at its very periphery; on the other hand, refugee accommodations and camps are social and political spaces where formalised and informal structures of support establish themselves, and forms of the capacity to take action, such as protests and/or everyday mundane and creative economic and survival strategies are manifested (Jansen 2016, 2018; Rygiel 2011; Turner 2016).

In recent decades, there has been increasing focus in research on refugee accommodations and camps in countries in both the Global North and South (Turner 2016; Krause 2015). Studies centering on the situation of refugee accommodations in Germany emphasise the institutionally determined situations of conflict and violence in such facilities as well as the associated huge mental and existential burdens and stress for the residents living in such circumstances (Täubig 2009; Kreichauf 2016; Wihstutz 2019). In Germany, there are also differences in the form of such accommodations. Basically, it is important to stress the need for further empirical studies on institutional specifics as well as on the commonalities between the formats of refugee housing arrangements in various different regions and federal German states.

In refugee accommodations in Germany, refugees densely crowded together – individuals who differ markedly in terms of their multifarious biographies, cultural backgrounds and experiences of flight – find little room for privacy. Medical and social care is limited. Being housed in a refugee accommodation is accompanied by extensive and strict social control and surveillance by the institutional mechanisms of asylum administrative practice. Distribution of goods such as clothing and furnishing is rationed. Shower facilities are often located outside their living quarters and can only be accessed during specific limited hours. As long as a decision on request for asylum has not been made, the place of residence is assigned to an initial reception institution (§ 47 AsylG)[2] and health care is restricted to a minimum. During the first three months after submission of a request for asylum and for the duration of stay in the initial reception institution, there is no access to the labor market, aside from a few number of exceptions (§ 61 AsylG).[3] These regulations lead to a situation where life for the persons there is characterised by boredom, uncertainty about the outcome of the asylum request, worry about the future and a regimen of prolonged waiting. Under such conditions, a self-determined participation in societal subsystems is impossible. The degree of participation is precisely determined institutionally and legally. The po-

2 https://dejure.org/gesetze/AsylG/47.html (accessed July 17, 2020)

3 https://dejure.org/gesetze/AsylG/61.html (accessed July 17, 2020)

litically designed immobilization of the persons in a place (Schmitt 2020), the externally determined everyday life, and its realities in such an institutional setting restrict the use of the social space and social contacts with persons beyond the accommodations (Pürckhauer 2019). As "quasi-total institutions" (Schmitz/Schönhuth 2020), accommodations and camps are characterised by institutional power relations and the potential for violence and conflict (Hess et al. 2018; Krause 2018).

There is controversy in the research literature over whether refugee facilities in countries in the Global North and refugee camps in the Global South have similar structures or differ fundamentally (Nyers/Rygiel 2012; Johnson 2016). McConnachie notes that refugee accommodation does indeed differ across the globe, but nonetheless despite its differential aspects evinces a shared structure of logic through the segregation of their residents from a surrounding area (2016: 398).

Likewise, under the impact of the coronavirus pandemic, this structural logic is, our thesis contends, in clear evidence throughout the differing and varied forms of refugee accommodations and camps. The realities of everyday life of individuals housed in the refugee accommodations in Germany, for example – and also in the large camps in southern Europe and in countries in the Global South – threaten at least partially to be overlooked by protective measures instituted by various nation-states. National support measures seem to be applied only contingently in these places of forced lodging and cohabitation. The risks arising from such densely structured cohabitation in such institutional loci of separation and segregation appear especially evident.

The realities of everyday life in refugee accommodations in times of the pandemic

Physical social distancing in refugee accommodation facilities is scarcely possible due to the density of occupation and the overall living circumstances that prevail. In the facilities in Germany there is an operative minimum surface area of six to seven m2 (Wendel 2014). However, refugees often share a multiple-bedroom of 12 to 14 m2, with three to six further refugees (initially unknown to one another). The existing common kitchen facilities and washrooms are used by all residents. Distribution of meals and options for shower are regulated by the institution and specified for certain times. These regulations necessarily lead to confrontation with other residents and staff. The management of refugee accommodations is reacting to this situation during the pandemic and its constraints. They are altering regulations on meal distribution, for example: thus, residents no longer eat in the canteens but rather in their own rooms. However, in order to pick up their meal at scheduled distribution times, they come into contact with others and waiting lines form. Individuals do not have face masks or protective gloves in all

dedicated accommodation centers. There is a lack of disinfectant and soap is in short supply, negatively affecting hygiene (Riese et al. 2020).

Residents perspectives only come to the attentions of the public in individual reports: they complain about a lack of information regarding the virus, inadequate measures in order to be able to protect themselves from infection and a lack of sensitivity in the ways they are treated by the security personnel. As first Covid-19 cases were registered, whole refugee accommodations were put under quarantine without adequate information of residents and violent protests arose (Süddeutsche Zeitung 2020). Existing conceptions of violence protection (see https://www.gewaltschutz-gu.de/) – such as those formulated in Germany by seven federal states in connection with the initiative Minimum Standards for the Protection of Refugees and Migrants in Refugee Accommodation Centres (BMFSFJ/UNICEF 2018) in recent years – appear in the case of the coronavirus catastrophe not to be sufficiently effective and to be reaching their limit.

Civil society voices demands

It is principally organizations in civil society, the UNHCR and critically reflected scholars who call attention to the persons forgotten within the protective measures taken during the coronavirus pandemic. In a joint statement by the working groups *Migration* and *Public Anthropology* in the German Association for Social and Cultural Anthropology (DGSKA), scholars have called for political measures. It notes that the top priority is the protection of human life for all, especially against the backdrop of the current pandemic, in order to prevent the further spread of the virus by means of targeted measures (Arbeitsgruppe Migration et al. 2020). In an 'urgent letter', social organizations and initiatives in civil society have endorsed the need for a rapid provision of support for refugees housed in refugee accommodations and camps, and they call upon the EU to act.[4] The campaign under the hashtag *Leave No One Behind* demands evacuation of persons in refugee camps.

Pro Asyl (2020a) points out that the flow of information regarding what is actually happening in and around the coronavirus pandemic cannot be regarded as secure and solid. Pro Asyl observes that there is a lack of personnel providing necessary information – for example, because responsible personel fall ill and stop working, and the number of staff on the job are being reduced in order to lower the danger of infection for all. Another deficiency noted is that there are no institutional channels of information available. For that reason, Pro Asyl set up a digital news ticker for refugees with information on the coronavirus pandemic and raised demands for improving the situation. These demands were directed to

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4 https://www.urgentletter.at/ (accessed July 17, 2020)

the federal government, the federal Ministry of the Interior, the federal German states and the Federal Office for Migration and Refugees (BAMF). They call for the following: release persons from deportation detention; an end to the practice of hearings; desist from issuing asylum rejection decisions; make use of decentral options for lodging refugees; express solidarity with refugees in the accommodation camps and evacuate persons from these structures (Pro Asyl 2020b). Calls for fundamental alternatives in accommodating refugees are growing ever louder now again. Nonetheless, in the spring 2020 there is still no systematic change in sight concerning living conditions of these individuals. In the refugee accommodations in Germany, one can note a reactive way of dealing with the coronavirus pandemic – action is taken if there is suspected infection with the coronavirus among the residents. In May 2020 ever more refugee accommodations were placed under quarantine (MiGAZIN 2020). The management units of the facilities now must grapple with the challenge of if and how cohabitation can be made safe and secure in the midst of a pandemic. Under the conditions of quarantine, residents' sense of powerlessness, mistrust and fears of isolation are being exacerbated. They are alarmed by the virus (Schredle 2020). Decentral lodging, such as in youth hostels, is being organised for some individuals infected or deemed highly vulnerable, but this is not being implemented across Germany and not for all concerned (Stieber 2020). Protests and conflicts with security staff are on the increase (Riese 2020).

Moria, Kakuma Refugee Camp and Kalobeyei Settlement

The life-threatening situation is worsening likewise for refugees living in the hotspots and camps in North Africa and at the Mediterranean as well as in refugee camps in the Global South. Necessary resettlement programs and evacuation measures have been put on hold as a result of the coronavirus pandemic, and harbours where rescue boats can dock were also closed. Groups in civil society are endeavouring to ensure that nobody gets forgotten in this pandemic crisis and are calling attention to the deprivation of rights of refugees in camps, for example in the Greek islands (Jakob 2020).

Focus here is especially on the camp Moria on Lesbos, which has an absorption capacity of 2,800 refugees; there are some 20,000 individuals now living there crammed together.[5] Provision of food and drinking water, necessary hygiene products, adequate sanitary facilities and secure living space is not assured

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5   Nevertheless, it is important to point out here that problem areas along similar lines can crop up in other camps as well. Empirical research is needed in order to be able to sketch a differentiated picture of the actual situation.

(Dischereit 2020). People are being housed in containers and tents or in provisional, self-constructed, makeshift dwellings. Long waits in line for water or to go to the toilet or wash up lead to sundry disputes, conflicts and fires and the lack of adequate medical care and sexual assaults lead to a situation of existential threat (Backhaus 2020). Quarantine measures cannot be definitely implemented given the presence of just a single hospital in the camp.

The situation is being exacerbated by the growing numbers of people in the camps and the absence of a European solution (Arbeitsgruppe Migration et al. 2020). In the spring 2020, eight EU countries declared their readiness to bring 1,600 especially endangered children to Europe. But as a result of the pandemic this initiative was postponed. In April 2020, 47 children were taken to Germany, and 12 children and juveniles up to age 17 in Luxembourg (NDR 2020). Since April 2020 if not earlier, the international press has also had increased reportage about a rise in cases of coronavirus infection likewise in the camps in southern Europe, with special attention to the Moria camp on Lesbos (Zoch 2020). Leaflets issued by the Greek authorities in various languages instruct those living there to preserve social distancing and maintain the necessary hygiene measures. The Danish aid organization Team Humanity provided sewing machines in an improvised workshop next to the camp and taught the residents how to make protective face masks. While aid organizations like Doctors Without Borders and activists in civil society are calling for total evacuation of the camp, to date only a selected few more elderly persons and families have been brought to the Greek mainland. In their plight, refugees from the Moria camp issued a second call in May 2020 demanding assistance from the EU, the governments of European countries and civil society (Moria Camp 2020).

Kakuma Refugee Camp and Kalobeyei Settlement in Kenya. Ethnographic Insights

If we turn to examining the situation in the large refugee camps in the Middle East, Asia and Africa, then a key question arises regarding the everyday situation in camps with a population in the range of six digits. One of these is Kakuma Refugee Camp, along with the bordering Kalobeyei Integrated Settlement in Kenya. With a population that has burgeoned in the meantime to almost 200,000 (as of March 2020)[6] coming from over twenty countries with multifarious political social and economic structures, the camp resembles an "accidental city" (Jansen

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6 The refugees come from the following countries: South Sudan, Sudan, Somalia, Ethiopia, Eritrea, Democratic Republic Congo, Congo Brazzaville, Ruanda, Burundi, Tanzania and others (UNHCR Kenya 2018a, 2020).

2011). Its history extends back to the year 1992. At that time, the expelled "Lost Boys of Sudan"; young Nuer and Dinka children, who in the course of the second Sudanese Civil War (1983-2005) were separated from their parents or made orphans, and were in search of a place of refuge. The Kenyan government declared it was prepared to set up a camp for the displaced. Today the camp comprises four quarters (Kakuma 1, 2, 3 and 4) as well as the settlement Kalobeyei with its three self-administered villages (UNHCR Kenya 2020). Alongside the UNHCR there are other organizations active in the camp. The refugee camp is situated in the northwest of Kenya at the periphery of Kakuma town in the district of Turkana West, ca. 120 km from the nearest small town of Lodwar and 130 km from the border with South Sudan. It is surrounded by a semi-arid desert environment that experiences regular sandstorms, high daytime temperatures from 35˚ to 38˚ Centigrade and recurrent outbreaks of malaria and cholera (UNHCR Kenya 2018). The majority of the surrounding local population are Turkana, nomad cattle herders, who under the extreme prevailing climatic conditions have difficult access to water, grazing land and other resources essential for life. As the access to water and pastureland is restricted under these extreme climatic conditions, the area has become a place of regular intergroup and cross-border violence with the neighbouring Pokot, Karamojong and others. Likewise, the relation between the local population and the refugees is ambivalent and tense, since some of the Turkana – in comparison with the refugees that are supplied and assisted by the aid organizations – do not think their needs are being properly perceived and met (Aukot 2003: 74; Böhme 2019).

Gaining insight into the daily life realities of two women living in Kakuma

In the framework of a research trip by one of the authors to Kakuma (see in detail Böhme 2019), it proved possible to make contact with two young women, Jamilah und Fazilah.[7] What their everyday situation looks like and how it was changed by the coronavirus is described below based on ethnographic fieldwork.

Jamilah fled from Somalia together with her parents in 1992 and has married and raised two daughters in Kakuma. After her divorce she has been raising her children by herself as a single mother. She works for an NGO and for an international organization in the camp. She hopes to be able to participate in a resettlement program in order to escape from life in the camp. In February 2020 Jamilah learned about the possibility of being accepted into the German Resettlement Program. The interview with the German delegation in March went well which fostered her excitement, hope and anticipation to a possible future in Germany. Due to the coronavirus pandemic, in mid-March 2020 all resettlement measures from Kakuma to other countries were halted. Her dream burst asunder.

Fazilah was born in Kakuma after her parents had fled South Sudan. She completed her secondary education in the camp and dreamed of a scholarship in order to be able to study abroad. Her engagement and work in the camp ultimately led to her being awarded a scholarship by the University of Nairobi in 2018 and she was able to leave the camp (see in detail Böhme 2019).

On March 20, 2020, the newspapers reported on the threat of coronavirus for the camp. Security personnel had stopped a Somali man returning from the US in his car on the road to Kakuma, who had symptoms of the virus. He and the passengers in his car were placed in quarantine (see in detail Lutta 2020). Shortly thereafter first rumours began to circulate that the virus had arrived in via Facebook. Since then Jamilah has been trying to remain with her two daughters in the small compound. Fazilah communicated her worries about the health of the residents in the camp via Facebook together with a selfie with children of the camp, along with a call for contributions for hygiene articles badly needed. People are dealing creatively with the lack of soap and disinfectant. A post on Fazilah's Facebook page shows the water canister suspended on the side of a corrugated iron hut, with soap installed on above it; this serves as the water faucet form the family.

At the end of March, a radio station reported that the Muslim camp residents were reciting prayers against the spread of the virus (REF FM Community Radio 2020). Schools and social facilities were closed, and the residents were told they had to remain at home within their limited dwellings. There was a national lockdown from 7 p.m. to 9 a.m. Whoever breaks the lockdown can be arrested. The Covid-19 lockdown caused bottlenecks in supplies for food and medical articles for the camp (Rodgers 2020). While the refugees waited for the distribution of food rations, they had to maintain social distancing marked out by chalk lines drawn on the ground (UNHCR 2020). As the first Covid-19 case was reported on May 25, the camp was officially closed for entrance and exit (Nation TV 2020). For the people living in the camp this means they even feel more imprisoned than before.

Move marginalised knowledge to the centre, develop perspectives for living together in solidarity

Our remarks here have sketched the situations of refugees in accommodations and camps in the Global North and South. Dangers threatening these individuals have become particularly evident. In March/April 2020 the World Health Organization formulated an answer for responding to these grievances described. The WHO recommendations for dealing with the Covid-19 pandemic in the large refugee camps underscores 5 central points:

1. Limit human-to-human transmission, including reducing secondary infections among close contacts and healthcare workers, preventing transmission amplification events, strengthening health facilities;
2. Identify and provide optimised care for infected patients early;
3. Communicate critical risk and information to all communities, and counter misinformation;
4. Ensure protection remains central to the response and through multi-sectoral partnerships, the detection of protection challenges and monitoring of protection needs to provide response to identified protection risks;
5. Minimize social and economic impact through multi-sectoral partnerships (WHO 2020a: 2).

In April 2020 an answer then followed about how to deal with the grievances beyond the large camps, as had become clear in the refugee accommodations in the member states (WHO 2020b). This set of proposals is conceived as 'interim guidance' and comprises recommendations for coordinating and planning preventive and reactive measures to protect from the coronavirus. Therefore persons housed in refugee accommodations should be granted the same rights, resources and access to medical care as all other groups in the population. Even if these recommendations suggest important points for dealing with the pandemic, they do not resolve and liquidate the basic problems connected with housing refugees on the periphery of society. Those fundamental problems constitute the point of departure in this section of the paper for developing visions for living together in society. Decisive here for being able to develop such visions is the knowledge of the people affected, their life realities and situation locally. Our reflections should be seen as an initial stimulus for thought on these problems and require further research and practice.

First of all, we argue for a *postmigrant perspective* which is highly relevant for research. Such a perspective focuses upon types of knowledge that are marginalised by hegemonic discourse– as the point of departure for research on forced migration that views itself as critical of society. This includes for example the knowl-

edge about the form of housing and innovative local life strategies and realities grounded in refugees' experience. Front and centre in this approach are the perspectives and knowledge of the actual individuals affected. That is because refugees cannot be viewed one-sidedly, reduced to having a single social role. Although a person who has fled her or his home is in many respects especially vulnerable or living in a precarious and at times dangerous situation, nonetheless specifically in such situations particular abilities for taking action play a large role (Kohli 2007). Refugees housed in camps should not be viewed per se or exclusively as victims. Rather, from a postmigrant perspective it is important to deconstruct the binary construction of 'victim' and 'helpers' (Seukwa 2006). Examples like those of Jamilah and Fazilah make clear how people grapple as active agents with marginalising life circumstances and even under precarious conditions develop the ability to take action. In order to be able to deconstruct one-sided social roles such as the over-represented role of the victim, relevant from a postmigrant research perspective on refugees is also to point up and describe creative life strategies under the prevailing circumstances of forced migration: how individuals under the most difficult conditions of life can transform emergency situations into virtues. A critical, postmigrant perspective does not simply suffice with identifying these forms of agency. Rather, it reflects on how to change social environments. Our analysis in the section above makes clear that cohabitation in refugee accommodations and camps is marked by a severe lack of living space and uncertain prospects for the future. Camps in countries in the Global South, as exemplified in our remarks on the situation in Kenya – in contrast with refugee facilities in Germany for example – exhibit a different history and a high number of residents of hundreds of thousands. Some of these persons spend in effect their entire lives in structures similar to cities, the Palestinian refugee camps as the most prominent example. Despite these differences, in the customary debates on protection in connection with the coronavirus pandemic, refugees both in the North and Global South are not accorded sufficient attention, such as by the EU. Their life situation, in any case marginalised, is currently being exacerbated, giving rise once again to the question: how can the life situations be described, analysed and changed in joint participatory action with those affected (Donnelly/Ní Raghallaigh/Foreman 2019; Von Unger 2018)? This touches on questions about how to grapple with global inequality and requires further reflection and research on how individuals, independently of their nationality and life situation, can be protected from global emergencies, and also how they can be empowered to make their conceptions of a good life a concrete reality. In this context, viewing refugee accommodations and camps *not* as a fixed format of asylum administration cast in stone opens doors for thinking out-of-the-box about the current situation, confronting it with creative and transformative postmigrant reflections.

Viewed historically, flight migration is not a temporary phenomenon. For that reason, they have to be approached and thematised in a lasting and continuous manner. Human mobility is likewise an anthropological constant and the topics of residence, labour and social inequality comprise concerns for society as a whole. However, as a global phenomenon, the coronavirus pandemic raises anew the question of what kind of global society human beings live in and wish to live in. One sense and purpose of a postmigrant discussion is to make global challenges the point of departure for cosmopolitan, inclusive optimistic and solidarity-based reflections. From a postmigrant perspective it is necessary to turn around the prevailing angle of vantage and to think in terms beyond the borders of nation-states and rescuer/victim dichotomies. Drawing on reflections by Mark Terkessidis (2017: 73), it is necessary to develop an optimism relevant for the whole of society in order to actually achieve progressive solutions in the era of mass (forced) migration and Human Flow. In order to prevent protection and human dignity from being degraded into exclusive rights and to avoid further intensifying social inequality on all levels in society, the following questions have to shift from the margins to the centre of society:

- How can social security, protection and a life in dignity be organised and shaped under conditions of forced migration?
- In what way can forced migration be raised thematically in discourse as central components of social life and binary categorizations of human beings according to their origin and forced flight or migration status be suspended?
- How can the topic of forced migration be shifted to the centre of attention and be viewed from a pan-societal perspective?
- How in such a process can the manifold forms of knowledge developed by the affected individuals across the planet be taken into proper account?

The extensive exclusion of refugees – or their consideration only as peripheral in national and international protection measures and debates on protection – renders questions of living together in solidarity and respect relevant. That is because social security and social protection come up against their limits and boundaries in a world organised on the basis of nation-states. Serious gaps in support within the context of the current pandemic are becoming visible once again. They are an expression of fundamental asymmetries of power and a marginalisation of those on the move across an order based on nation-states (Raithelhuber/Sharma/Schröer 2018). The coronavirus pandemic makes it imperative to explore further solidarity-oriented concepts of inclusive social togetherness, to make that an object of in-depth inquiry and to test its potentials and limits. In this connection, it is especially crucial to take those into account who are constrained to live in uncertain and precarious spaces. Over the longer term, it is imperative, along-

side refugee accommodations, to investigate solidarity-based forms of residence, as are experimentally developed in various communal forms of living together. Likewise, it is important to perceive and recognise the strategies of coping and design adopted by refugees in their everyday life worlds, and proceeding from that to re-imagine anew residential and living areas. This can entail avoiding the destruction of solidarity-based infrastructures of cohabitation and economic activity that refugees in camps have conceived and implemented by and for themselves; we need only recall the case of the refugee tent city encampment in Calais in France forcibly dismantled in the fall of 2016 (Agier et al. 2018). Camps develop their own infrastructures and generate alliances in civil society, which in their organic growth – in tune with the needs of the residents living in the refugee accommodations– come to appear ever more similar to small or even big cities. Tiny shops, libraries or spots to charge a mobile phone spring into being within this framework (Volk 2017). It is important to take this human potential seriously; it needs to be welcomed and utilised as a possibility to create and fashion new forms of human togetherness. Crucial and central in this are in particular the knowledge of the local residents and the necessity to adopt perspectives close to actual realities on the ground. It is necessary to look precisely to those persons who are pioneers setting a public example of how they deal with dangerous and threatening life situations. This knowledge is significant and should be a focus of research. Central here is the question as to how the people involved wish to live, what visions arise in an existential conflict situation despite or due to such adversities, and what potentials for realization can be exploited.

Future prospects: on the way to a cosmopolitan, inclusive plan of solidarity?

We wish in closing to focus on specific examples of people's knowledge and concrete action that to date has been insufficiently examined – while simultaneously keeping in mind that this focus needs to be expanded.

In European countries since the 'long summer of migration 2015' (Hess et al. 2016), solidarity-based urban initiatives have developed, for example in Greece, Spain and Germany (Doomernik/Ardon 2018). These alliances grounded on solidarity espouse the notion of a *resident citizenship*; they pursue the aim of creating an urban space free from fear, inclusive and full of zest for life. The engagement in building solidarity is advanced in this connection by trans-urban networking (such as https://solidarity-city.eu/de/). What is meant is an organization of support not coupled with constructions of belonging to a nation-state. In this conception, access to social benefits – such as health care provision, education, a place to live and work – is enjoyed by all persons who are resident in a given locality

(Hill/Schmitt 2020). The conception seeks to break free from the potential barrier of having to have a specific nationality qua legal citizenship in order to participate. The notion of solidarity-based togetherness in urban space is oriented to the concept of the 'sanctuary city', which is an idea that has been spreading in the US and Canada since the 1970s (Bauder/Gonzales 2018). The urban vision of cities of solidarity foregrounds inclusive spaces of human beings living together. In this conception, forced migration is viewed as a central component of social and societal life. We contend that foregrounding and dealing with cities of solidarity can, under the impact and in the wake of the coronavirus pandemic, provide new social and broader societal stimuli. Since 2015 numerous localities have declared themselves a 'solidarity city'. In the network Solidarity Cities (https://solidarity-cities.eu), mayors and representatives of cities have banded together in order to call attention to the central role of towns and cities in dealing with processes of forced migration and to call for political codetermination. Their aim is formulated on their homepage in these words: "Solidarity Cities is open to all European cities wishing to work closely with each other and committed to solidarity in the field of refugee reception and integration" (https://solidaritycities.eu/about). On the ground locally, in the neighbourhoods and city districts, it is mainly social alliances and groupings in civil society that seek to translate postmigrant visions in concepts for practical everyday living (Bukow 2018). Thus, already available are a range of knowledge resources and global experiences with forced migration, which specifically in regard to the coronavirus pandemic appear valuable to utilise in designing forms of accommodation in keeping with human dignity and cosmopolitan, inclusive ways of life. The book *So schaffen wir das – eine Zivilgesellschaft im Aufbruch* (That's how we can do it: A civil society on the move, 2017) by Schiffauer, Eilert and Rudloff contains portraits of support movements operative in civil society espousing progressive urban visions of living together. One example is Queere Unterkunft Berlin (Queer Accommodation Berlin), run by Schwulenberatung Berlin (Gay Advice Berlin), a residential facility for LGBTI* refugees. This form of residence has a unique character and is a cosmopolitan, inclusive measure that protects LGBTI* refugees from discrimination, forging innovative alliances in the sphere of social work. United together here are emergency and community facilities, psychosocial and legal counselling services, a special community 'integration kitchen' and a residential project that is oriented to diversity (Schiffauer/Eilert/Rudloff 2017: 47-49). The Refugio Berlin (https://refugio.berlin) is a cosmopolitan residential project that aims to achieve an equitable form of living together including both long-established residents and newcomers. Through providing rooms for local events and a café, it seeks with its own visions to influence attitudes and spur change in the urban quarter. It becomes clear here how the inventive absorption of refugee families can lead to revitalising of cityscapes.

Solidary alliances are also developed at the forgotten hotspots on the Greek islands as well as in countries which accommodate a large quantity of refugees in the Global South. On the island of Lesbos several NGOs and communal initiatives are working on concepts integrating refugees into the host communities: Lesvos Solidarity for example is a Greek NGO supporting refugees together with the local population. The NGO offers shelter and support, local integration by giving people a voice with their skills and knowledge. The NGO connects the different people in the area and aims to be a connecting hub (Lesvos Solidarity 2020). On a larger scale, UNHCR initiated a "Settlement Approach" to find alternative ways to the separated encampment of refugees. The approach aims to account for the long durance of displacement of refugees from certain regions and the strong beneficial socio-economic impact of refugees in certain regions. Its aim is to build up social and cultural co-operations between refugees and the local population. The Kalobeyei Settlement just next to the Kakuma refugee camp is one such example. In cooperation with the Turkana County Government, UNHCR, EU and other partners, the Kalobeyei Integrated Socio-Economic Development Programme (KISEDP) was initiated in 2015[8] to promote the self-reliance of refugees and the host population in Turkana West to enhance their livelihood opportunities, to create an enabling environment, to strengthen skills and capabilities of refugees and people without the experience of flight and to strengthen the community's resilience as a whole (UNHCR 2018b). The settlement opened in 2016 and is up to date accommodating around 37,500 refugees. Kalobeyei represents an innovative model of the global refugee accommodation and is an alternative to closed camp spaces. Betts et al. (2020) differentiate in their comparative study of the Kakuma camp and the Kalobeyei settlement between benefits and limits of the two concepts. In Kalobeyei, many resources to enable the promoted self-reliance like public goods were limited for refugees. But as the authors note, due to an alternative aid model the extent of agriculture and cash transfer and in this way nutrition and perceived autonomy were much greater in Kalobeyei than in Kakuma. The authors conclude that Kalobeyei – while still in the first phase – could succeed if only the theoretical concepts of self-reliance would adequately be translated into practice (Betts et al. 2020: 220).

It is precisely these examples that clarify that forced migration does not necessarily have to be accompanied by immobilisation, rigid control and defensive measures towards refugees. Rather, people's mobility can support cosmopolitan inclusivity and serve as engines for development par excellence for both the rural and urban areas. Within discussion in urban sociology, it is specifically the laws of urban life that allow for new residents being able to move freely and individually

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8   The settlement project follows a three-phase approach with a preparatory stage in 2016-2017 followed by Phase I (2018-2022), Phase II (2023-2027) and Phase III (2028-2030).

in the cityscape without requiring the approval and consent of the residents in the neighbourhood (Bude 2019: 37-38). These diverse landscapes constitute a success paradigm for absorption of new arrivals. Yildiz (2013: 45-46) has commented pointedly on this aspect: "city is migration". Without the in-migration of persons or structural options and facilities that make it possible for people to commute easily from one point to another – making almost momentarily their choice for where, when and with whom they establish solidarity alliances – today's cities and our global conceptions of them would even be hardly conceivable at all.

It is these developments, that need to be taken in consideration when thinking of new ways of living together in a postmigration society (Foroutan 2019: 198-200). The solidarity-based alliances sketched in this paper develop new spaces of solidarity with strong visions of togetherness. They basically show how it is possible to react progressively in situ to human mobility (Hill 2018). This is bound up with a sustained rethinking and modification of the structural modes of designing of our diverse landscapes in respect to the increasing diversity that characterises them (Sennett 2018). Consequently, it is these progressive landscapes and solidary action that develop visions thriving on openness and further development. These alliances need to be recognised and taken into account. It is necessary to utilise their potentialities for an open, cosmopolitan and inclusive way of dealing with human flight and migration. The separating, segregative refugees accommodations call out for the need – not only during the coronavirus pandemic – of local action and the development and implementation of visionary concepts: in refugee camps and accommodations all across the planet, individuals and groups are forging creative strategies for grappling and coping with their situation from an isolated position. It is precisely the knowledge of those persons that must shift from the public periphery into the very centre of deliberation and action. Grounded on that central point we seek to initiate what we have derived from analysis in our critical confrontation with refugee accommodations and camps: the vision of a solidarity plan for society as a whole. This plan goes beyond the barriers of closure and separation of people in segregated accommodations. Instead, the knowledge of those individuals directly affected has to be placed front and centre, and proceeding on from there, new visions need to be imagined, thought through carefully and then made concrete reality.

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